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Heraclitus Ridens,

AT

A DIALOGUE between *JEST* and *EARNEST* Concerning the *TIMES*.

From Tuesday January the 18*th*. to Saturday the 22*d*. 170¾.

Jeſt. POor Fellows! I pitty 'em from the very Soul of me, their Wives and Families, at this Rate, muſt be a Rent Charge to the Reſpective Pariſhes they belong to. As for the Poets, and the reſt of the Scribling Fraternity, their Condition affects me very little, they have nothing to loſe but a ſcandalous Employ, and it's concluded on all hands that ſuch a thing is better loſt than kept.

Earn. That there is a great Neceſſity of Regulating the Preſs, and bringing it into its proper Compaſs, there is none but will grant you; but that violent Means ſhould be made uſe of to bring about ſuch a Deſign, it is not in my Thoughts to apprehend at this Juncture. While the Nation is taking Care to provide for the Poor, it would be Ridiculous to imagine we ſhould add to their Number by depriving ſuch of their Employments as now help to Maintain 'em. And Four or five hundred Families that muſt Starve for want of Buſineſs, deſerve the higheſt Conſideration. Every Company of Livery Men have their ſeveral Charters, and it would give theſe People a Handle to Think it Hard, to have their particular Trade, that is Precedent in Place and Reputation to many others, circumſcrib'd within ſuch Limits, as it will be impoſſible for the Younger ſort of 'em, that deal in Papers and Pamphlets of a leſſer Bulk, almoſt to Subſiſt.

Jeſt. And are not you a merry Fellow to be a Latudinarian in reſpect to the Preſs, when in our laſt you declar'd your ſelf on the ſide of Reſtraining it? Come, come, you know the Modern way of preventing the progreſs of Flames, is to blow-up ſome Houſes, that the Fire may not ſpread it ſelf in common with the reſt, and it is but fitting that a Part ſhould be deſtroy'd, to preſerve the Whole.

Earn. But if other Expedients, and of a leſs dangerous Nature might be found out inſtead of ſuch Remedies; Would not you think it more Adviſeable to lay-hold of 'em; not that I would be thought wanting in my Reſpects for the Meaſures of my Superiors, which I pay all imaginable Deference to; but would, if poſſible, add to the moſt humble Petition of the Company of *Stationers*, eſpecially that Branch of it which relates immediately to the Preſs, that ſuch Means might be made uſe of as not to deprive 'em altogether of what their honeſt Labours and Induſtry might acquire the Poſſeſſion of;

Read *Jeſt. Hang 'em for a Parcel of Drunken Rogues*, ſaid an Eminent Occuliſt t'other Day, who has Eyes but cannot *Read* with 'em, *Theſe Books ſpoil more People than I have deſtroy'd Patients, I am for an Act of Parliament to make it High Treaſon to Print the Four and Twenty Letters, they are of ſuch a pernicious Conſequence. Fair and ſoftly*, ſaid a Perſon that over-heard him, *Pray good Dr. put on your Conſidering Cap a little; How would your Famous Cures come to be known far and near without a Lift from the Preſs.* In good Troth, reply'd the *Cataract-Monger*, Men of my Occupation, like your *Great Wits*, have ſhort Memories, I forgot my ſelf, it's a Myſtery that is very uſeful, and I have got many a Penny by the Lyes I have diſpers'd about thro' the Means of it. But to leave *Albugo's*, *Defluxions of Humours*, *Wens*, *Hair-lips*, *Wry-necks*, *Cancers* and *Polypus's*, with the De'el and all of hard Names beſides, Be ſo kind as to Inform me, ſince you ſet up for Dictating to the Publick, what Propoſals you can make for Remedying the Diſorders of the Preſs without any Prejudice to the Publick concern'd in it; for as I take it, that is what you Chiefly drive at.

Earn. You have my Intentions to a Syllable, and I ſhall explain my ſelf as ſhort as poſſible to that Purpoſe. That the Licenſe of the Preſs is undoubtedly veſted in the Crown, we have no Reaſon at this time of Day to diſpute, and that the Government may leſſen or Increaſe the Number of Perſons concern'd in it, has been elſewhere made appear beyond any manner of Queſtion to the contrary; but that this Government, after they had given Encouragement to the Progreſs of Learning, by Tolerating ſuch an Increaſe to the Trade, and making it Popular and Flouriſhing, ſhould at once withdraw its Favour, and leave ſuch as had Serv'd their Time to it, in Hopes to get an Honeſt Livelihood, might in all Appearance be look'd upon as a Hardſhip too Severe for ſo mild an Adminiſtration as the Preſent is; Wherefore

1*ſt*. It is preſum'd, that if it be thought fitting, that there ſhould be a Licenſer, or more of the Name, he or they, ſhould be well Atteſted to be Friends to the Government and Church Eſtabliſhed, and of ſuch Principles as ſhould ſhew an undeniable Deteſtation for Republican and Seditious Syſtems.

2*dly*, It is ſubmitted to the Great Wiſdom of our Superiors, that this Licenſer or Licenſers ſhall have ſuch a Sallary from the Government, as to Enable them to be Diligent and Careful in their reſpective Offices, without Liſtening to the Importunities of Bribes, &c. which has been

been too visibly made use of in Times precedent, particularly at the Beginning of the late Reign.

3*dly*, That whoever shall upon the Oath of any Credible Witness be found Guilty of taking one Penny on the foregoing Account from Author, Publisher, Bookseller or Printer, *&c.* directly or indirectly, shall immediately after such Oath given, be discharg'd from his Office, as Supervisor of the Affairs of the Press,

4*thly*, That the Numbers of Master Printers may be Ascertain'd, and the Patent of the Law Printers may be Enquir'd into, in order to Regulate their Demands, and bring it to a less Compass than Demands *at libitum*, and Arbitrary Pretensions.

5*thly*, That these Printers in general shall be confin'd to such a Number of Apprentices, and not lend a Hand towards the Impoverishing the Trade, by taking such a Number as is inconsistent with any other Occupation, since I am able without much Difficulty to prove, That there is now one who by fraudulent Means keeps Nine under that Notion, not far from *Little-Britain*.

6*thly*, That every one's Copy be Secur'd to him for his own, as if it were his respective Freehold, and those that shall Print, Abridge, or Copy from what is another's Right and Property, shall be Responsible by several Mulcts and Penalties, for the Benefit of the Person or Persons so Aggriev'd.

7*thly*, That no Book whatsoever be Tolerated or made publick, that runs-counter to the Religion of the State as well as the Civil Constitution, which is the only way to propagate the Church of *England* Doctrine, and hinder contagious Growth of Sects that are Repugnant to it.

8*thly*, and lastly, That if any Author shall take upon him to write any thing against the Church Establish'd, he shall suffer as one equally Criminal with those that oppose the Political Government, especially if he makes Profession of the same Communion with it, or wears the Habit that belongs to Persons in Holy Orders.

Jest. Why truly you have handled your Text to some purpose, and it's time for you to have done, after you have brought your Audience to the Eigth Division. You have both my Hands to every individual Article, whatever shall be thought fitting to be done by the Gentlemen whom the Consideration of these Matters now lies before, and the last of all is so Apropos, that I should be in love with a Law that should be Enacted to that purpose. Those who like Dr. *Oats*, wear the sacred Robe on purpose to Disgrace it; and to let you know what sort of Complexion your *Occasionalist Divines* are of, I shall give you a true as well as diverting Story, which you may take into your Auditory Passages, as follows.

A certain Gentleman that makes no indifferent Figure amongst those that were Affectionate to Republican Principles, amongst other Advantages, had the Honour to improve himself in a Nobleman's Family, where by the strength of a smooth Behaviour, and the Argumentive Brawn of his Back, he had more than common Familiarity with the Female Domesticks belonging to that Noble Peer, so long that it was too visible there was but an odd sort of a Correspondence held between him and those of a different Sex. Among the rest of the Family that smoak'd the Matter, it came to the Lord's Ear, who would have dismiss'd him from farther Attendance; but upon these Conditions, That he should wash something about him, that had been too Rampant, with Vinegar every Morning, which was readily comply'd with, and the Lord having call'd him by his Christian Name, and being ask'd every Morning whether he had bath'd the *Concerns* as had been stipulated; and returning for Answer, *Yea, my good Lord*, *John* was sent up to Unlock the Maids Chamber Doors, and turn 'em out to their respective Employments.

Earn. This may be true forasmuch as I know, but I am utterly against telling any Story of such a Nature; and if it should be false, you may happen to repent mentioning any thing of it. I owe no body so much Mischief as to speak any thing indecent of 'em, unless they are common Enemies to Mankind, and am your Friend in disswading you from any thing that may cast an Aspersion upon a whole Order of Men, whether true or false.

Jest. I thank you for your Advice, but I am of such a communicative Faculty that I can hold nothing in, but I shall endeavour to be Retentive for the future, by a little of your Help.

Next Tuesday will be Published in Setts, there being Fifty in Number, Heraclitus Ridens, *At a Dialogue between* Jest *and* Earnest *Concerning the Times.* Vol. I. *With a Preface relating to the Designs of it. Neatly done in Blue Paper. Price* 2 s. *Sold by* John Nutt *near Stationers-Hall, and by the Booksellers of* London *and* Westminster.

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